



Southeast News

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New Challenge To Christian Education



REV. JOSEPH IRWIN

Irwin Called to Button Gwinnett UCC

On July 26, 1981 the congregation of Button Gwinnett United Church of Christ, located in Lilburn, GA, called the Rev. Joseph H. Irwin as pastor and teacher. Rev. Irwin was able to begin in the position on August 9.

A native of Chattanooga, TN, Rev. Irwin was a summa cum laude graduate of Georgia State University where he majored in sociology and religion. He obtained his seminary education from Union Theological Seminary, New York, N.Y.

Prior to accepting the call to Button Gwinnett, Rev. Irwin was serving in the dual role of Minister to the Community from Central Congregational Church, UCC in Atlanta and as State Consultant to the Georgia Department of Family and Children Services in the area of Neglected Children.

Having served in the United States Marines, Rev. Irwin's previous experience includes business and public relations, social work, crisis and family counseling, teaching at Emory Theological Seminary

[Continued on Page 3]

Reclaiming Christian Education, by Frances E. Eastman and Carolyn E. Goddard, is an interesting educational resource for use by local congregations. This book explores wholistic Christian education, basic assumptions, resources and procedures to be considered in Christian education, and insights into keeping education fresh and alive.

"In many churches at present the church school is said to be in trouble," say the authors. "Fewer students are enrolled than ten or twenty years ago. Interest is declining. Does this mean that Christian education is fading away? Or the church! NO! It means that a new challenge to Christian education confronts us."

Published by the United Church Press, "Reclaiming Christian Education" is available for \$2.50 plus 75c shipping and handling from: UCBHM, Division of Publication, Periodical Dept., 132 West 31st St., NY, NY 10001.



MS. SUE HARTMAN

Conference Welcomes New Administrative Assistant

Mrs. Sue Hartman is the new Administrative Assistant for the Southeast Conference. She replaces Mrs. Corretia Davis who accepted a position with Southern Bell.

Mrs. Hartman brings to the Southeast Conference Office not only administrative skills, but a formal background in Christian Education.

A graduate of Webster College in St. Louis where she received her B.A. degree, Sue attended Eden Theological Seminary and received an M.Ed. in Christian Education from Concordia Teaching College in Nebraska.

Having served as an education consultant for the Nebraska Conference as well as representing that conference in ecumenical Christian Education organizations, Sue has also served as the Director of Christian Education for Country Club Congregational Church in Kansas City and as a member of the Missouri Conference Commission on Leadership and Program.

As a volunteer in Christian Education in churches where ever she has lived, Sue has

[Continued on Page 3]

Religious Freedom Survey Done

The April issue of A.D. magazine listed the results of a recent world-wide survey of religious freedom. In this survey, religion was defined as "that which one believes and acts upon in obedience to understandings or impulses presumed by a community to be transcendent in origin."

A.O. concluded that:

—The free exercise of religion is limited to some degree almost everywhere.

—Faithfulness to a religion can also, upon occasion, carry heavy price tags of discrimination, pain, imprisonment, or death.

—A.D. points out, however, that religious freedom, as seen in the long view, is increasing, not decreasing.

The world's ten most oppressive regimes regarding religion, according to the survey are:

1. Albania
2. North Korea
3. Saudia Arabia
4. Afghanistan

[Continued on Page 2]

Seminary Enrollment Slows Sharply

According to the National Council of Churches, seminary enrollment is showing a sudden halt in the recent trend of steady growth.

After an average growth rate of 5.6 percent over the last seven years, seminaries enrolled only 2.4% more students in the fall of 1980 than in 1979. With 194 schools in the U.S. and Canada, 49,611 theology students were reported enrolled.

Almost 11,000, or 21.8% of the students, were women, though the growth rate for female seminarians fell from 13.7% in 1979 to 6.1% in 1980.

Blacks made up 4.4% of the total, registering a fairly normal increase of 7.9% for the year. Hispanic and Pacific/Asian-American enrollment slowed after several years of rapid growth. The 894 Hispanics registered this year make up just 1.8% of the total, while the 602 students of Pacific or Asian descent account for 1.2% of the seminary population.

Native Americans were counted by the Association of Theological Schools in the U.S. and Canada for only the second year in 1980. Their numbers rose from 52 to 64.

New Publications Available

Teenage Pregnancy: A challenge to do right by each other. Published as the conclusion to the two-year teenage pregnancy project conducted in the UCC through the Board for Homeland Ministries, the publication serves both as a report and as a study-action guide. Cost: \$3.95 for single copies; \$2.95 each for 10-49 copies; \$2.50 each for 50 copies or more. Make checks payable to: UC Board for Homeland Ministries and send to Teenage Pregnancy Project, 132 W. 31st St., 17th Floor, New York, NY 10001.

Invest Yourself 1981: a catalogue of service opportunities. The 35th anniversary edition, this publication is dedicated to the role of the full-time volunteer in meeting the rising tide of worldwide need. Single copy rate, all prepaid: \$3.00. Bulk rates, 10 copies - \$20.00; 50 copies - \$90.00; 100 copies - \$120.00. Send to: Invest Yourself, c/o Susan Angus, 415 E. 12th St., Apt. 11, New York, NY 10009.

CURT'S NUGGETS

From the desk of Curtis Schumacher, Pleasant Hill, Tennessee:

God does not expect you to give your last dollar; God expects you will give Him your first dollar.

CALENDAR UPDATE

Nov. 7 — East Alabama Religious Education Committee, LaGrange United

Nov. 7-11 — UCBWM Annual Meeting, Louisville, KY

Nov. 8 — Stewardship Sunday

Nov. 13 — Order Spring Quarter: CESA church school materials

Nov. 14 — Executive Council and Committee Meeting, Alabama-Tennessee Association, Chattanooga Pilgrim UCC — South Alabama-NW Florida Association Religious Education Committee, Andalusia First

Nov. 21 — East Alabama Men's Fellowship, Pleasant Grove, LaFayette, AL

Nov. 20-22 — Alabama-Tennessee Association Youth Pop-In, Huntsville UCC

Nov. 26 — Thanksgiving — Family Thank Offering

Nov. 26-27 — Conference Office closed

Nov. 27 — Board of Directors Meeting, Uplands Retirement Center, Pleasant Hill, TN

Nov. 29 — First Sunday in Advent — Suggested date for collection of gifts for Morgan-Scott Christmas Store

Nov. 30 — Subscriptions due for *Southeast News*

Nov. 30-Dec. 3 — National Placement Event, Detroit, Michigan

Dec. 4 — East Alabama Ministers and Wives Christmas Dinner, Lanett UCC

Dec. 5 — East Alabama Youth Rally, Bethel Church, West Point, GA

Dec. 12 — North Alabama Ministers and Wives Dinner, Decatur, AL

Dec. 16 — Suggested date for Veterans of the Cross Christmas offering

Dec. 24-25 — Conference Office closed

Dec. 25 — Christmas

Dec. 30 — Subscriptions due for *Southeast News*

Religious Freedom - Cont'd

5. China

6. U.S.S.R.

7. Czechoslovakia

8. Iran

9. South Korea

10. South Africa

By way of comparison, the United States and Canada are, according to the survey, among the ten "most free" areas of the world, standing together fourth behind the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (excluding Northern Ireland).

Pick Your Sermon By The Numbers

Rev. Richard O. Sparrow, minister of the Village Congregational Church, UCC, Northbridge, MA, with his tongue firmly planted in cheek, has suggested that sermons have ratings.

"Now that we have become accustomed to code rating for movies," he said in the church newsletter, "it might be helpful to have a similar code for rating sermons."

In suggesting the system could be patterned after the codes used in theaters across the country, he took a few jabs at the weekly sermon.

It goes like this:

G — Generally acceptable to everyone. Full of inoffensive, puerile platitudes such as "What the world needs is peace and motherhood" and "Go ye into the world and smile." This type of sermon is usually classified as "Wonderful" or "Beautiful" or "On the right track."

M — For more mature congregations. At times this type of sermon even makes the gospel relevant to today's issues — in subtle ways, of course. It is often described as "challenging" or "thought provoking," though no one intends to take any action or change any attitudes.

R — Definitely restricted to those who are not upset by the truth. This type of sermon tells it like it is. It is very threatening to the comfortable. It is most often described as "disturbing" or "controversial" and usually indicates that the preacher has an outside source of income.

X — Positively limited to those who can handle explosive ideas. This type of sermon "really socks it to 'em." It is the kind of sermon that landed Jeremiah in the well, got Amos run out of town, got Jesus hung on a cross, and set things up for the stoning of Stephen. It is always referred to as "shocking" or "in poor taste." The minister who preaches an X-rated sermon had better have his suitcase packed and his insurance paid.

The Meaning of Faith

"To plunge fearlessly into life, to walk humbly on every level, to lend a hand in the common chores of existence, to cease fearing about advantages and disadvantages, comfort and peril, to lose oneself in living a real life — this is the call of religion to everyone, the very venture and meaning of faith."

— Samuel H. Miller

Eleven Strategies For Creative Retirement

1. Look at each life stage, including retirement, as a new opportunity for satisfying living not possible before that time.
2. Approach retirement intentionally and thus awaken realistic hope.
3. Plan to do more of those things that make you feel really alive.
4. Let go of energy wasting remorse and grief so that your inner creativity can flow.
5. Be kind to your body.
6. Increase and broaden your pleasure potential, including sexual pleasure.
7. Keep your network of nurturing relationships in healthy condition.
8. Invest yourself in some cause that turns you on.
9. Enrich your inner space (reading, reflection, meditation, music, etc.)
10. Develop a viable philosophy of life that will allow you to deal creatively with your finitude. (We have an identity and that identity is somehow mysteriously rooted in the wider universe.
11. Keep creating.

DR. HOWARD CLINEBELL
Claremont School of Theology

Irwin - Cont'd.

and initiation of a variety of community ministries in Atlanta and the Southeast.

Rev. Irwin is married to the former Carol Dunaway. The Irwins have one child, Peter, who is two years old.

Button Gwinnett UCC is one of five new church starts in the Southeast Conference.

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Southern Alabama Area Mini-Camp

Mini-Camp Enjoyed

Some 75 young people enjoyed a Mini-Camp held July 31 - August 2, 1981 and sponsored by the Southern Alabama Area Council.

Meeting at West Point Boy Scout Camp, West Point, GA, participants represented the fellowships of 12 different area churches.

Participants included young people from the 4th grade through senior high young people.

That Triangle Again

Nothing that is worth doing can be achieved in our lifetime; therefore we must be saved by hope. Nothing which is true or beautiful or good makes complete sense in any immediate context of history; therefore we must be saved by faith. Nothing we do, however virtuous, can be accomplished alone; therefore we are saved by love. No virtuous act is quite as virtuous from the standpoint of friend or foe as it is from our standpoint. Therefore we must be saved by the final form of love which is forgiveness. —Reinhold Niebuhr

New Assistant - Cont'd.

been a church school teacher (of all ages!), superintendent, youth sponsor and is currently the Chairperson of the Board of Christian Education of Button Gwinnett UCC in Lilburn, GA. where she is a member.

Sue and her husband, the Rev. Don D. Hartman, live in Stone Mountain, GA with their children, Emily and Darren. As a family they enjoy music, painting, drawing, and making puppets and toys.

Mission Values Refreshing

The Rev. Tom Thomas, UCC missionary in Zambia, is growing so used to his adopted country that he has trouble remembering how different the U.S. is. "For example, I must remember," he writes, "that most Americans cannot go into their back yards and pick an 80-pound bunch of bananas. Nor can most Americans wake up in the morning and hear the squawking of layers preparing to give them an hour-old egg for breakfast."

"Certainly the American church would not even consider holding a three-day national church conference for 3,800 people in a fairgrounds where there are no sleeping or bathing accommodations and the food had to be cooked on fires. Nor would most church people consider traveling for 14 hours in a packed train in order to attend that conference."

"for a year or more one congregation worships in a half-finished church building, where the altar table is made with cinder blocks piled one on top of the other. But the building is packed to overflowing, and during worship one hardly notices that this is not a magnificent cathedral!"

New Historical Journal Offered

Historical Intelligencer is the name of the new historical journal sponsored by the Historical Council of the United Church of Christ. The first issue of the Journal features major articles by Louis M. Gunnemann, David C. Stineback and Conrad Wright. Future issues of the journal will explore other facets of the rich traditions represented in the United Church, and will continue to address those local church officers whose responsibility it is to care for congregational records.

Those who joined the Congregational Christian and Evangelical and Reformed Historical Societies by responding to the Historical Council's 1979-1980 Appeal, at the sum of \$10 (individuals) and \$20 (institutions) will receive copies of Historical Intelligencer at no further cost. Members who joined at the rate of \$5 (retirees-students) are asked to give an extra \$1.50 (a total rate of \$6.50) if they wish to receive the journal. Non-members may subscribe at the rate of \$2.50 an issue.

Send all correspondence and inquiries to Historical Intelligencer, The Historical Council United Church of Christ, 105 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

NEWS & NOTES

During the month of October, the Sunday morning worship services of Lanett, AL, Congregational Christian Church, UCC, were broadcast live over a local radio station.

Dr. W.J. Andes, former Southeast Conference Minister, as a special guest of the Alabama-Tennessee Association's Annual Meeting, took the occasion to visit seven other churches in the Association where he presented the story of Elon Home for Children, which he now serves as Associate for Development.

The Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta recently announced that one of the organizations it supports — Mothers Mutual of Atlanta — is to be the recipient of a \$20,000 grant from Church Women United USA. The grant is the largest authorized in the 40 year history of Church Women United.

Rev. Marwood E. Rettig, senior pastor of Immanuel United Church of Christ, West Bend, WI, has been elected Conference Minister of the United Church's North

Dakota Conference, which consists of 75 churches with nearly 9,000 members.

The Morgan-Scott Project for Cooperative Christian Concerns has moved. The new address is: 800 Pike Road, P.O. Box 800, Sunbright, TN 37872. The new phone number is: 615-628-225.

The National Council of Churches is sponsoring "Crossroads 1982" — a training event for young adults ministries, to be held June 21-26, 1982 at Lake Geneva, WI. For more information write: Crossroads 1982, National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 711, New York, N.Y. 10115.

The Rev. Benjamin Chavis, field director of the Washington, DC office of the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice, has been promoted to deputy director of the Commission. Rev. Chavis is responsible for coordinating Black constituency development within the United Church and assisting Charles E. Cobb, Commission director, with ecumenical relations.

Is your church receiving CAIM News, the official newsletter of the Council for American Indian Ministry, an instrumentality of the United Church of Christ? If not, write to: CAIM, News, 122 W. Franklin, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404.

Rev. Ira Chace will be officially installed as minister of Pilgrimage UCC, Marietta, GA on Sunday October 18 by the Georgia-South Carolina Association. A new church start, Pilgrimage closed its charter and was recognized as an independent congregation in June of this year.

Pilgrim UCC, Birmingham, AL has 155 pupils enrolled this year in a Day School program recognized as one of the best in the state.

Rev. Robert Dana, interim minister for Button Gwinnett UCC, has been called to a church in Cambridge, Nebraska, and will begin service October 1.

On October 11, Rev. Andrew Frierson and his wife, Annie, will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. Rev. Frierson is pastor of First Congregational UCC in Chattanooga, TN.

Mr. Steven Voelker was ordained into the Christian ministry by the East Alabama Association on September 20, 1981. Rev. Voelker is pastor of Jones Chapel Church, Woodbury, GA.

Pleasant Hill Community Church had a fellowship dinner on September 16 at which the programs of the Morgan-Scott Project and "Appalachia Habitat for Humanity" were highlighted.

SE NEWS SUBSCRIPTION

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